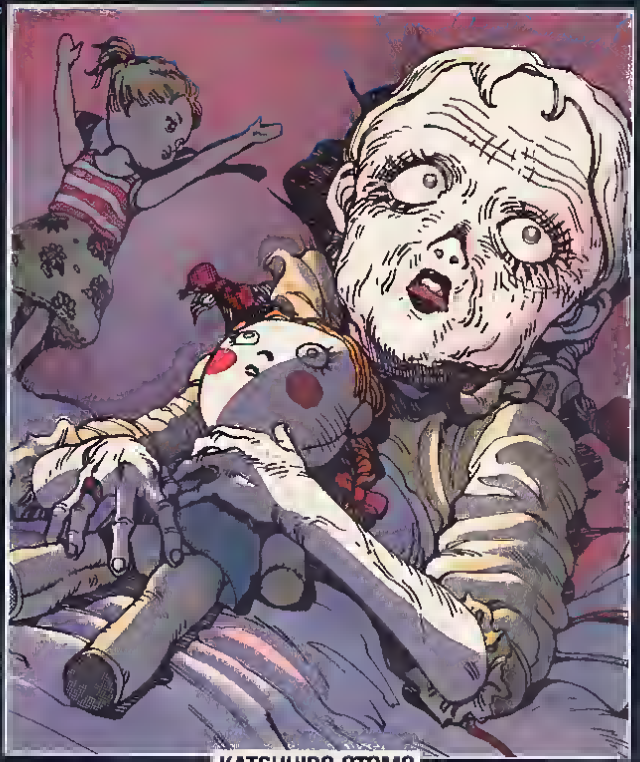
AKIRA 7™



KATSUHIRO OTOMO

EPIC COMICS® $3.50 • $3.75 CAN • VOL. 1, NO. 7

Published monthly by EPIC COMICS
in collaboration with Kodansha Ltd. Tokyo
Office of Publication
387 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10016

AKIRA™ Vol. 3 No. 7
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WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

The year is 2030. The world is rebuilding from World War III. In **Neo-Tokyo,** plans are being made to hold the next Olympics in the "old city"—where thirty-eight years before the first of the bombs fell.

Kaneda and his friends teenage delinquents make an unauthorized motorcycle run into the old city to check out the old site. They encounter a terrified child, known only as **Number 26,** possessing extraordinary telekinetic abilities. During the encounter, the paranormal boy gravely injures **Tetsuo,** one of Kaneda's close friends. Then, he vanishes.

The next night, at **Harukiya,** a tough local dive, **Kaneda** attempts, unsuccessfully, to pick up a newcomer, **Kay.** In fact, she and her companion, **Ryu,** are part of an underground resistance group dedicated to learning what is happening in the old city and putting a stop to it.

Trouble ensues, and both delinquents and resistance fighters again encounter **Number 26. Ryu** attempts to reassure the paranormal boy, but **Kaneda** is anxious to punish him for injuring **Tetsuo.** As they argue, the mysterious soldiers pursuing **Number 26** reach the scene and a firefight results.

Then the ominous **Colonel** in charge of the covert operation appears with a secret weapon—**Number 27,** a crippled paranormal child named **Masaru. Masaru** astonishes the resistance fighters by addressing **Number 26** as **Takashi. Kay** and **Ryu** had previously assumed that **Number 26** was the Colonel's ultimate weapon—the as yet unseen paranormal giant code-named **Akira.**

Kaneda provokes a crisis by pretending to threaten **Takashi,** who is exhibiting symptoms of drug withdrawal. **Takashi** responds with telekinetic upheavals. **Kaneda** is again separated from the resistance fighters, but he manages to intercept and hide a pill meant for **Takashi,** who is recaptured by the Colonel's men.

The next day, **Tetsuo**—who following his accident was taken to a hospital by soldiers—reappears in school, seemingly

all right. However during Tetsuo's treatment the **Colonel** has learned that the delinquent has great psychic potential.

Kaneda has a girlfriend in the school infirmary analyze the drug intended for **Takashi**. It is similar in substance to pills **Kaneda** and his friends take, but unbelievably concentrated and powerful.

Determined not to let a new human weapon escape him, the **Colonel** goes to the school and collects **Tetsuo**. Under the treatments of the Colonel's chief medical officer, **Tetsuo** exhibits powerful psychic abilities and undergoes great pain.

Meanwhile, **Kaneda,** trying to spy on the **Colonel** and learn what is happening to **Tetsuo,** re-encounters the members of the resistance, and is brought back to their headquarters. Questioned by **Ryu,** he denies all knowledge of the stolen drug.

Kiyoko, another of the psychic children under the Colonel's control, announces to her master the disastrous news that **Akira**—who is asleep, and expected to remain so for some time—will awaken in the near future. Meanwhile, at the resistance hideout, **Kaneda** encounters a ghost-like apparition of himself shouting Akira's name.

When soldiers enter the resistance hideout in force, **Kaneda** and **Kay** manage together to escape to **Herukiye,** where the bartender agrees to shelter them.

Overwhelmed by pain, **Tetsuo** breaks out of the Colonel's installation, using his burgeoning powers to slaughter all who oppose him. **Tetsuo** takes control of the **Clowns**—a vicious motorcycle gang who are rivals to **Kaneda** and his friends—letting them live in return for the massive amounts of drugs required to stave off his agony.

Ryu meets with **Nezu,** a resistance leader, and they share new evidence on the scale of the **Akira** project.

A spy from the Colonel's organization learns of the **Herukiya** hideout, but he is caught and left for dead by a resistance fighter.

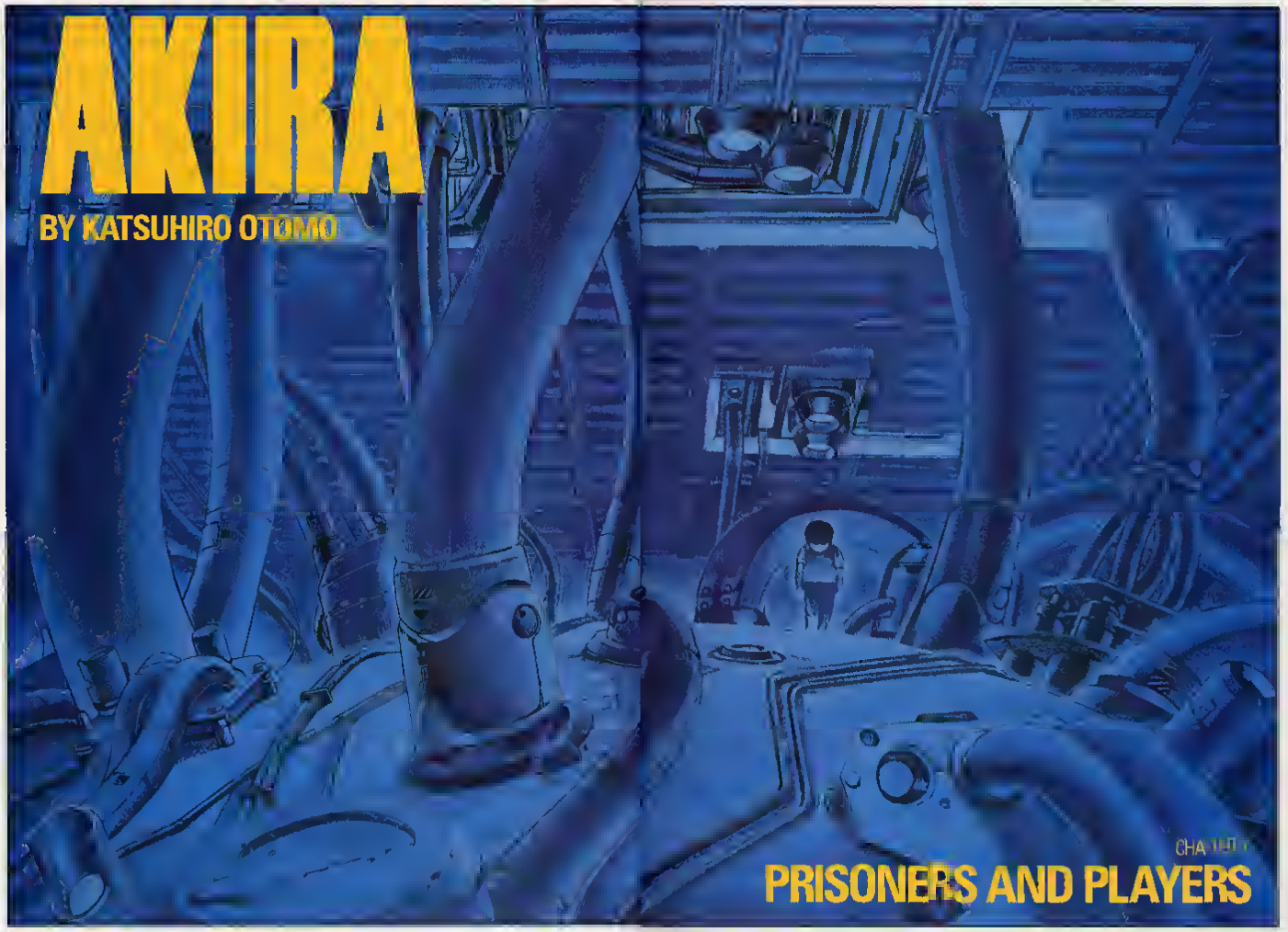
Yamagata and Kaneda's other friends come to **Herukiya. Kaneda** is amazed at the stories they tell of Tetsuo's new powers and of his bloodthirstiness. He and **Yamagata** lead all of the local street gangs on a massive all-out attack to stop **Tetsuo** and the **Clowns.** Shortly after they leave, the Colonel, alerted by his informant, arrives at **Herukiye** and forces the bartender to tell him where the fugitives have gone.

Yamagata and his team corner **Tetsuo** in a warehouse. Most of the gang dies, and **Yamagata** tries to shoot **Tetsuo. Kaneda** reaches the scene in time to see **Tetsuo** brutally kill **Yamagata.** Enraged, **Kaneda** does shoot **Tetsuo**, who survives the deadly wound. As they fight, **Tetsuo** grabs the drug **Kaneda** had hidden.

When the **Colonel** arrives, **Tetsuo** swallows the drug, apparently dying of an overdose. A few minutes later, the terrible delinquent recovers, more powerful than ever, and the elated **Colonel** rechristens him **Number 41**.

AKIRA

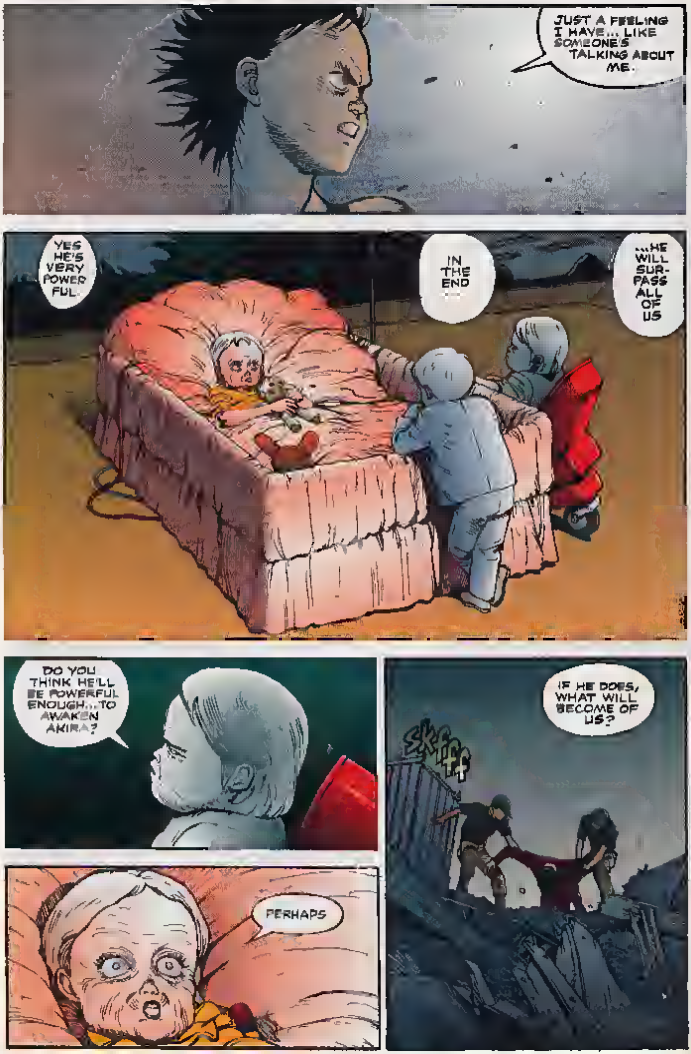
BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

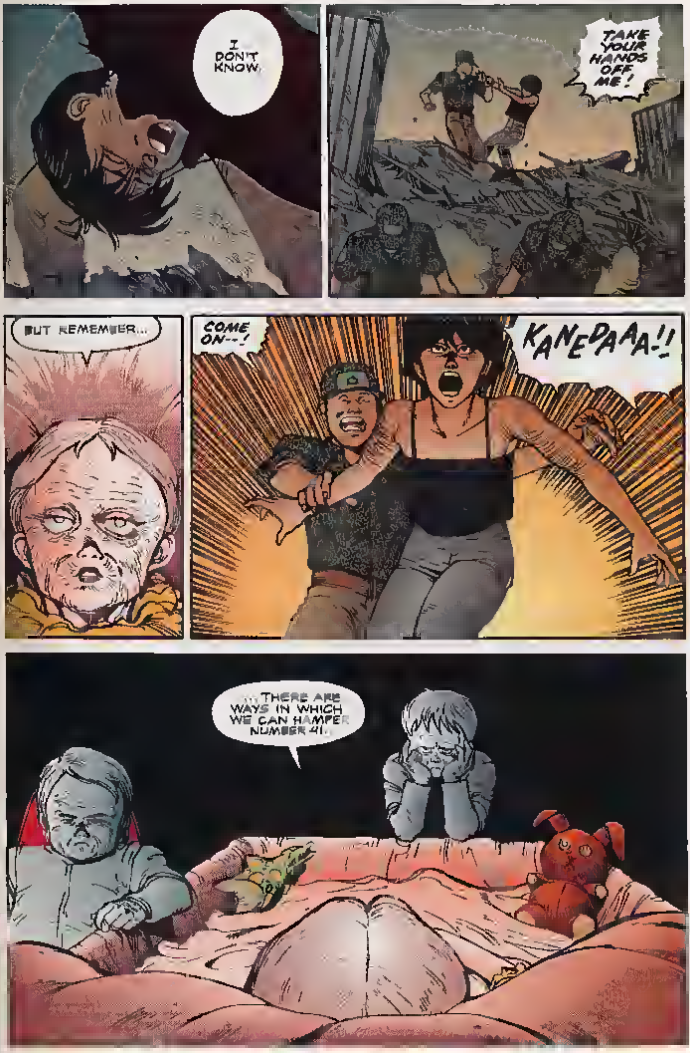


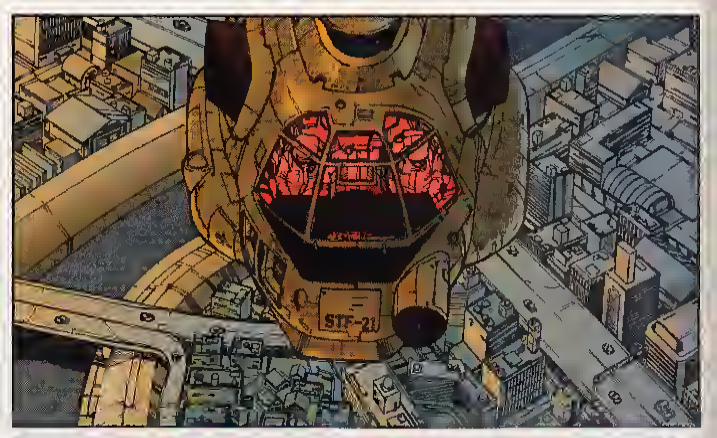
CHAPTER 1

PRISONERS AND PLAYERS

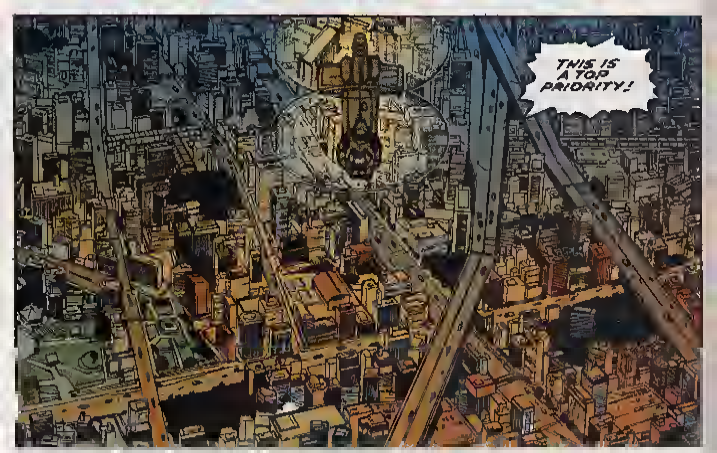
TE... TSU... O...?!
YES, TETSUO.
HE'S ON HIS WAY TO BECOMING ONE OF US. THEY CALL HIM NUMBER 41.
IS HE
VERY POWERFUL?
HM?
IS SOMETHING BOTHERING YOU?

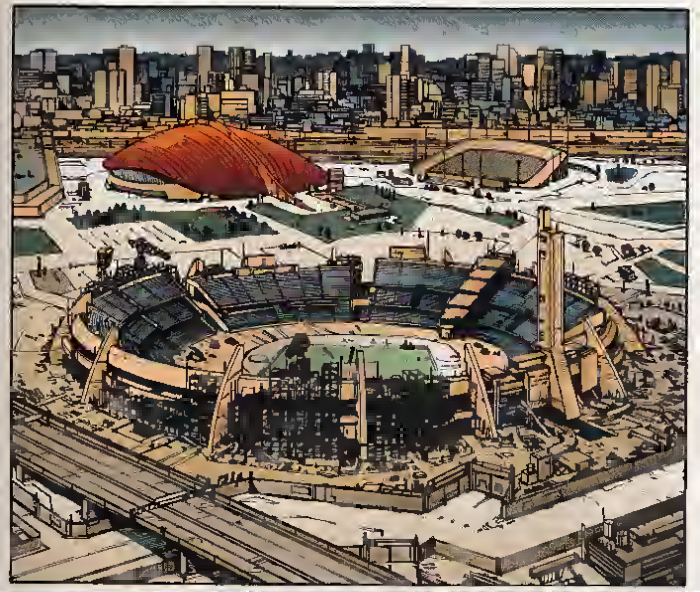

JUST A FEELING I HAVE... LIKE SOMEONE'S TALKING ABOUT ME.
YES HE'S VERY POWERFUL.
IN THE END
...HE WILL SURPASS ALL OF US
DO YOU THINK HE'LL BE POWERFUL ENOUGH...TO AWAKEN AKIRA?
IF HE DOES, WHAT WILL BECOME OF US?
PERHAPS


I DON'T KNOW.
TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF ME!
BUT REMEMBER...
COME ON--!
KANEDAAA-!!
THERE ARE WAYS IN WHICH WE CAN HAMPER NUMBER 41.


STF-21

THIS IS STF-21, EN ROUTE TO LAB 24
WE ARE BRINGING IN A CASUALTY. HAVE AN AMBULANCE WAITING WHEN WE LAND.


THIS IS A TOP PRIORITY!

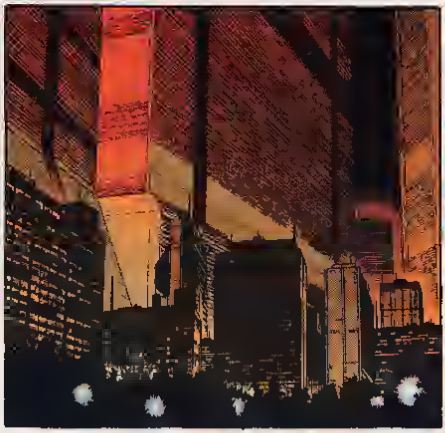


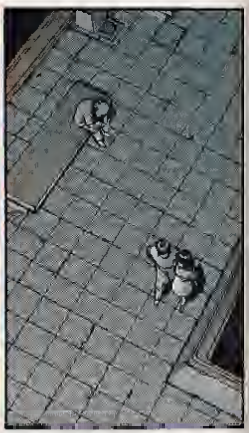
東京オリンピ
建設現場の日
開催まであと413日

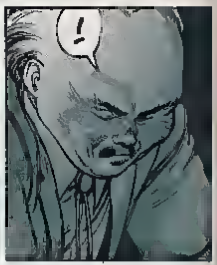
KLANK
KLANK
KLANK
whirrr..
SWE
GRG

GNG
GNG
KLANK
KLANK
RRRRR
REEE
DA
DA
DA
DA
...
A HELIPORT

THE ARMY...
Click
Vrrrt
AND BEYOND THAT...
THE HEART OF DESTRUCTION



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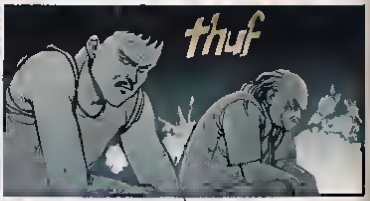
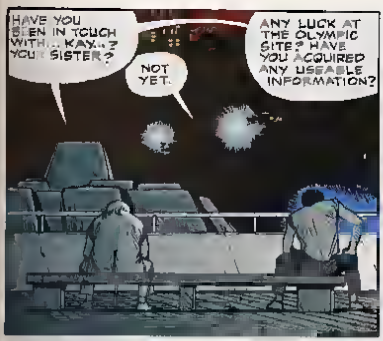
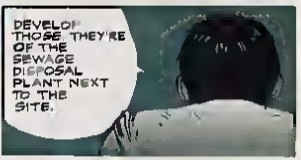

thuf

YOU'RE GETTING A NICE TAN, WORKING IN THE SUN ALL DAY, RYU


HAVE YOU BEEN IN TOUCH WITH... KAY...? YOUR SISTER?
NOT YET.
ANY LUCK AT THE OLYMPIC SITE? HAVE YOU ACQUIRED ANY USEABLE INFORMATION?

klink


DEVELOP THOSE. THEY'RE OF THE SEWAGE DISPOSAL PLANT NEXT TO THE SITE.

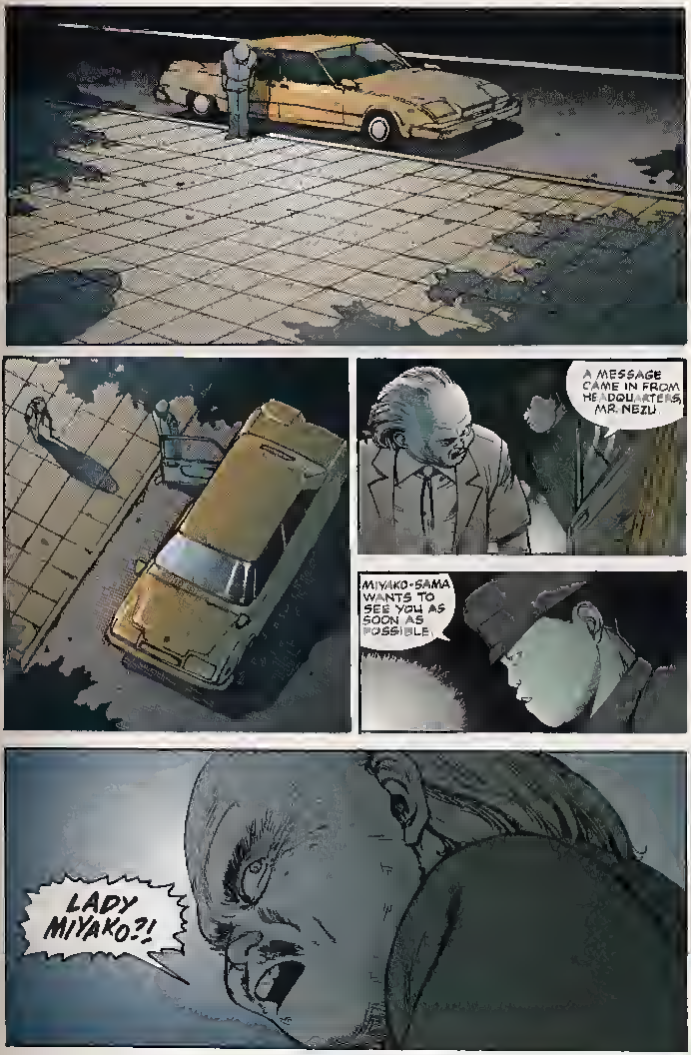
I FAIL TO SEE WHAT--!
INTERESTING LACE.
DUE SOUTH OF THE SITE, AND CRAWLING WITH SOLDIERS. OFF LIMITS TO CONSTRUCTION WORKERS...

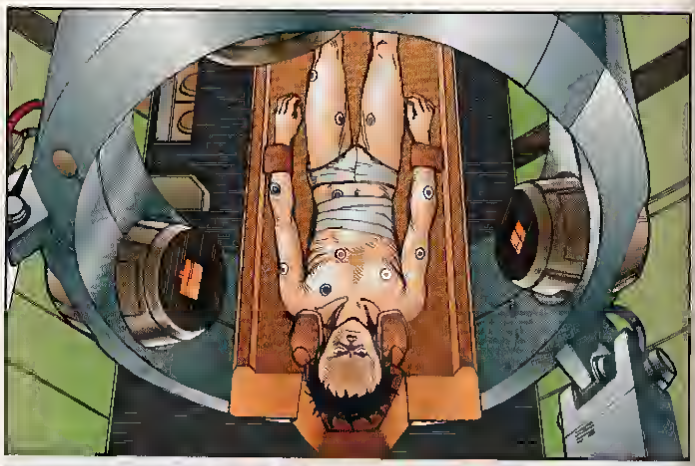
AND TOO HEAVILY GUARDED FOR ME TO GET ANYWHERE NEAR IT

ANYTHING YOU CAN LEARN IS IMPORTANT.

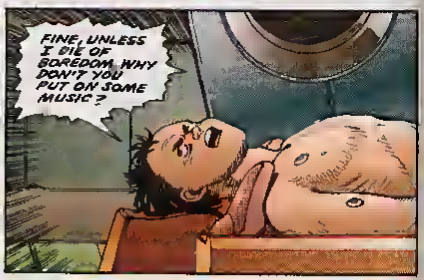
THE ARMY HAS JUST ACQUIRED MORE LAND, AND THEY ARE CALLING FOR MANEUVERS ON A MASSIVE SCALE.

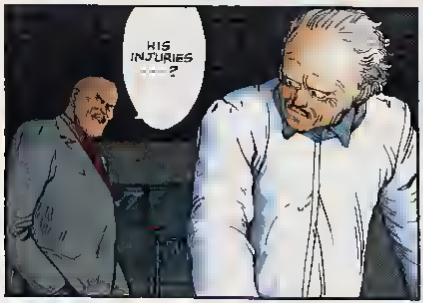
IT SEEMS THE PROJECT IS NOW UNDERWAY.
WHERE?
FOR THE MOMENT, MY SOURCE MUST REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL, BUT I ASSURE YOU, THE INFORMATION IS RELIABLE.
WE HAVE TO DEVELOP NEW STRATEGIES TO STOP THEM, WHICH MEANS...
...I'LL NEED A DETAILED REPORT ON EVERYTHING YOU'VE OBSERVED SO FAR...
RIGHT.
GET ON IT AT ONCE!

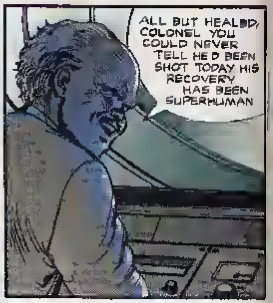

A MESSAGE CAME IN FROM HEADQUARTERS, MR. NEZU.
MIYAKO-SAMA WANTS TO SEE YOU AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
LADY MIYAKO?!

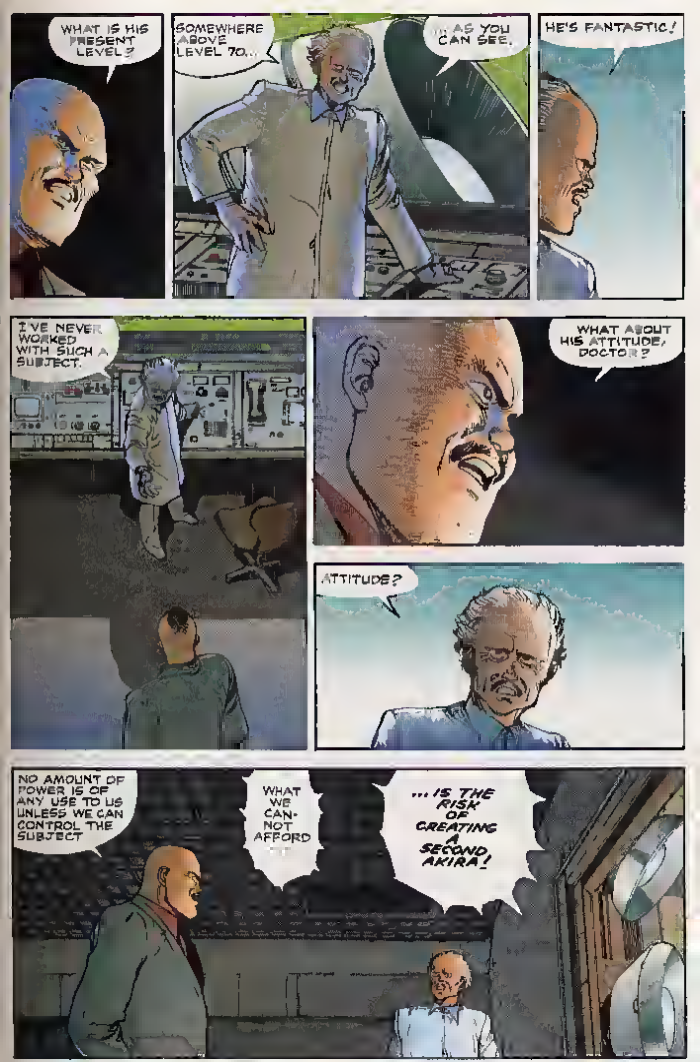


HOW ARE YOU FEELING, TETSUO ?

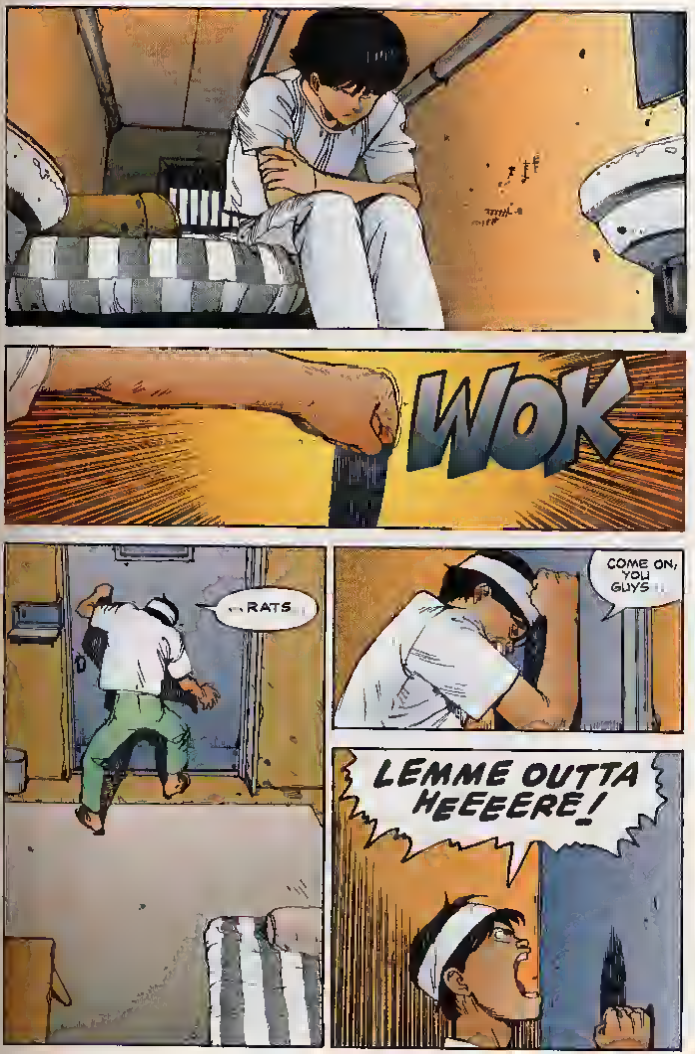

FINE, UNLESS I DIE OF BOREDOM. WHY DON'T YOU PUT ON SOME MUSIC ?


HIS INJURIES ... ?


ALL BUT HEALED, COLONEL. YOU COULD NEVER TELL HE'D BEEN SHOT TODAY. HIS RECOVERY HAS BEEN SUPERHUMAN


WHAT IS HIS PRESENT LEVEL?
SOMEWHERE ABOVE LEVEL 70...
...AS YOU CAN SEE.
HE'S FANTASTIC!
I'VE NEVER WORKED WITH SUCH A SUBJECT.
WHAT ABOUT HIS ATTITUDE, DOCTOR?
ATTITUDE?
NO AMOUNT OF POWER IS OF ANY USE TO US UNLESS WE CAN CONTROL THE SUBJECT
WHAT WE CAN-NOT AFFORD IT
...IS THE RISK OF CREATING A SECOND AKIRA!

ANOTHER... AKIRA...?


WOK
RATS
COME ON, YOU GUYS
LEMME OUTTA HEEEERE!

ANYBODY HERE?!
GOOD EVENING, MR. NEZU.
SHE'S BEEN WAITING FOR YOU FOR SOME TIME.
WHY DOES SHE WANT TO SEE ME AT THIS HOUR? IS ANYTHING WRONG?
YOU'RE LATE

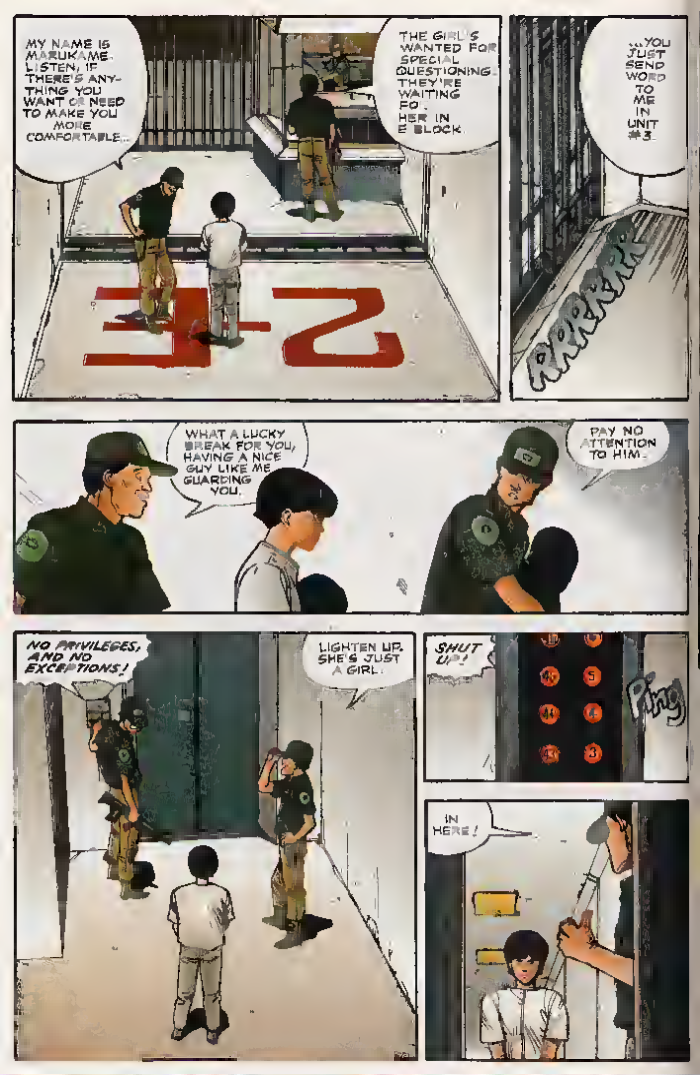
PLEASE ACCEPT MY APOLOGIES LADY MIYAKO WHY DID YOU SUMMON ME?
AH... NEZU... LITTLE RODENT...
I WANTED TO TELL YOU OF WHAT I HAVE DREAMED
CHAK

AND WHAT... WHAT IS THAT?
I DREAMED OF DISASTER
WHAT... SORT OF DISASTER?
CATASTROPHE. ONE THAT WILL ALTER THE FACE OF THE WORLD.
AND NO ONE... NONE OF US...
...HAS THE POWER TO PREVENT IT.

IS THE NAME OF THIS DISASTER "AKIRA"?
IT IS A DESTINY WHICH CANNOT BE AVERTED.
AKIRA IS A PAWN, AS ARE WE ALL.
THE DAY OF HIS AWAKENING DRAWS EVER CLOSER-- ALREADY EVENTS HAVE BEEN SET IN MOTION
FOR YOU-- FOR YOUR ENTIRE PEOPLE & PARTY-- THIS WILL BE THE TURNING POINT. IT MUST NOT CATCH YOU UNAWARES.

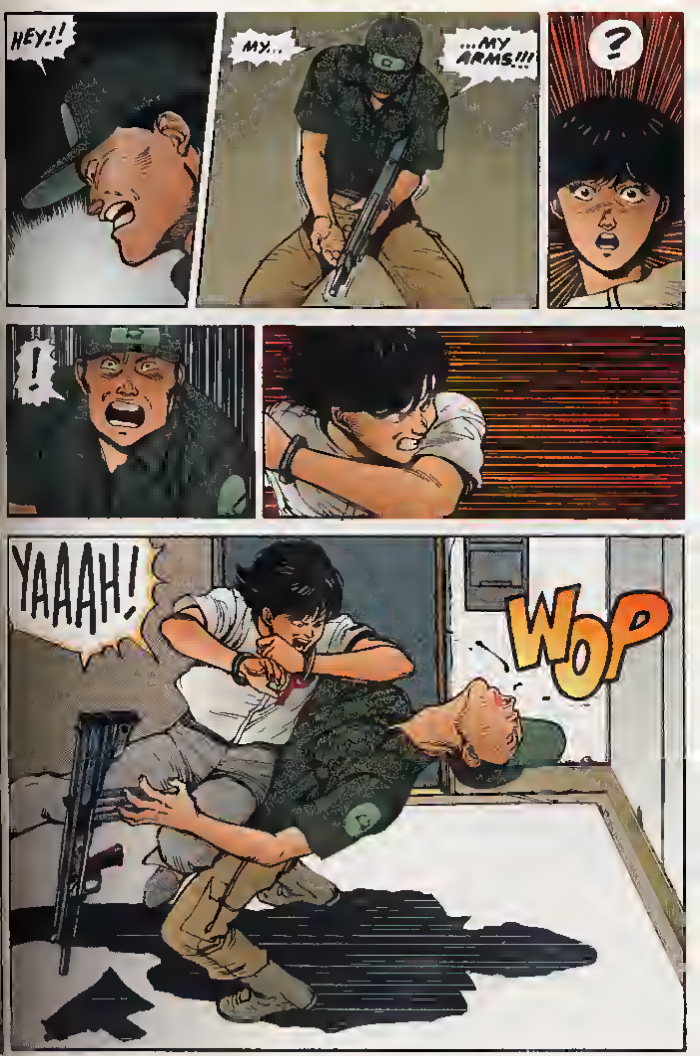
KIK
GET OUT HERE!
WHAT A CUTE PRISONER! WHAT'S YOUR NAME, HONEY?
NOW, MOVE IT!
COME ON, GIRLIE THEY WANT TO QUESTION YOU...
GEE!

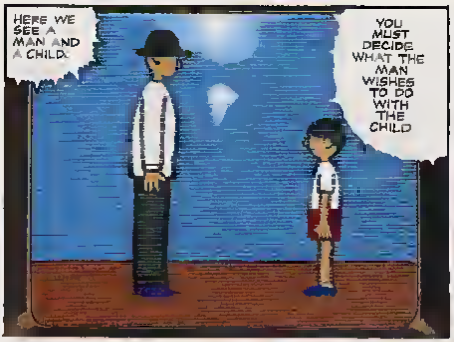
POOR YAMAGATA...!!
COME ON... LET'S BE FRIENDS. I COULD MAKE YOUR STAY HERE A LOT NICER.
STOP IT, YOU FOOL!
I COULD GET YOU A MAGAZINE... OR SOME CANDY WOULD YOU LIKE THAT?
KNOCK IT OFF!
AW, I WAS JUST JOKING SOME PEOPLE SHOULD LEARN TO TAKE A JOKE, SHOULDN'T THEY, HONEY?
LIFE'S MORE FUN WHEN YOU KNOW HOW TO ENJOY YOURSELF!


MY NAME IS MABUKAME. LISTEN, IF THERE'S ANYTHING YOU WANT OR NEED TO MAKE YOU MORE COMFORTABLE...
THE GIRL'S WANTED FOR SPECIAL QUESTIONING. THEY'RE WAITING FO. HER IN E BLOCK.
...YOU JUST SEND WORD TO ME IN UNIT #3.
GRRRRR
WHAT A LUCKY BREAK FOR YOU, HAVING A NICE GUY LIKE ME GUARDING YOU.
PAY NO ATTENTION TO HIM.
NO PRIVILEGES, AND NO EXCEPTIONS!
LIGHTEN UP. SHE'S JUST A GIRL.
SHUT UP!
Ping
IN HERE!

tap
!
POP
HUNH--?!
WHOOSH
WHAT THE--?!

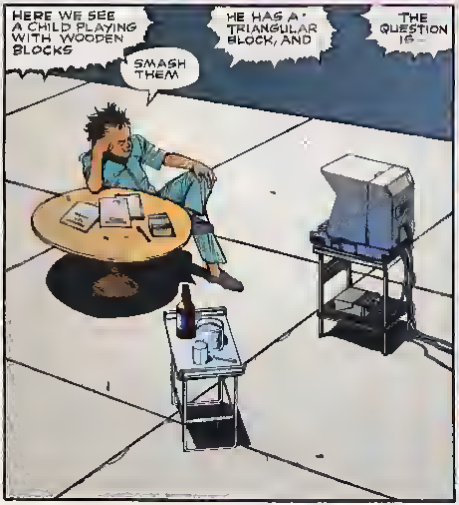
THUNK
!
OW!
THOK
YOU BITCH!
HEY!
FREEZE!
SWOOSH
WAIT FOR ME!!


HEY!!
MY...
...MY ARMS!!!
?
!
YAAAH!
WOP


HERE WE SEE A MAN AND A CHILD.
YOU MUST DECIDE WHAT THE MAN WISHES TO DO WITH THE CHILD

ONE-- WILL THEY PLAY BALL?
TWO--...?

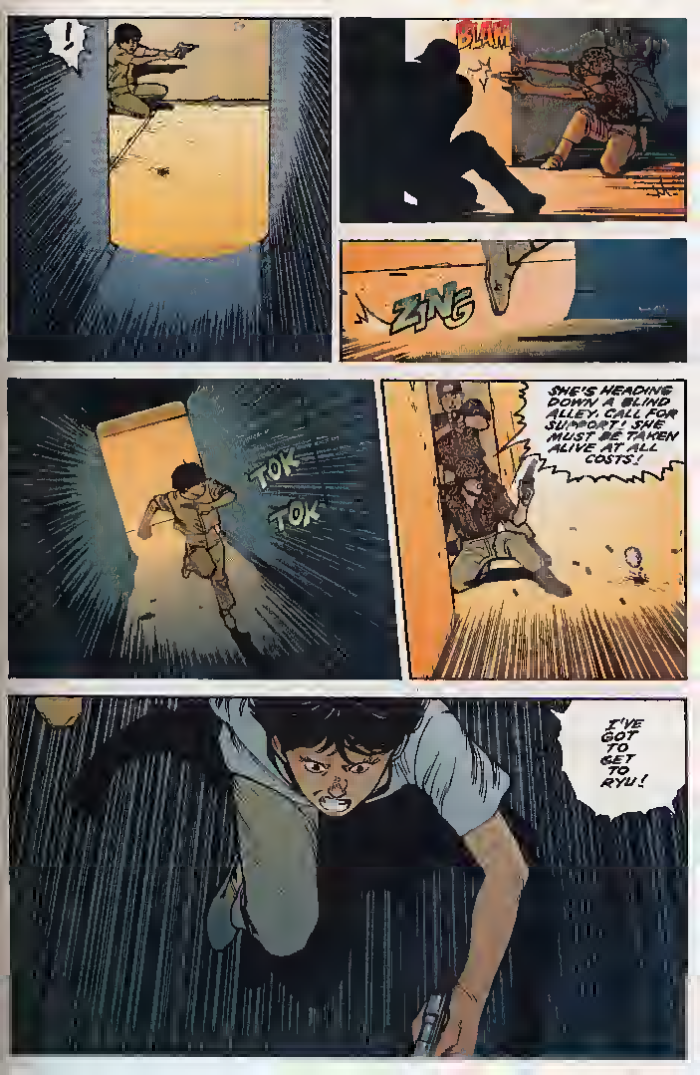
THREE-- HIT EACH OTHER ON THE HEAD?
AND BREAK THEIR NECKS.
FOUR-- KICK...?


HERE WE SEE A CHILD PLAYING WITH WOODEN BLOCKS
SMASH THEM
HE HAS A TRIANGULAR BLOCK, AND
THE QUESTION IS--

AAOOOOO
?!

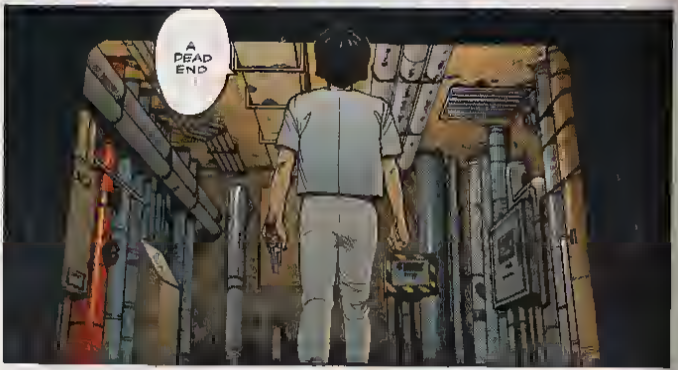
AAAOOOOOOOOO
WHAT'S GOING ON?!

rattle
TOK
TOK
TOK
TOK
klink
TOKKA TOKKA TOKKA TOKKA TOKKA
:GASP:
OH--!
OOF--!
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM


!
BLAM
ZNG
TOK
TOK
SHE'S HEADING DOWN A BLIND ALLEY. CALL FOR SUPPORT! SHE MUST BE TAKEN ALIVE AT ALL COSTS!
I'VE GOT TO GET TO RYU!

DID YOU BRING PROTECTIVE GEAR?
YOU BET I DID!
THAT'S NO ORDINARY GIRL!

SAY
P


A DEAD END

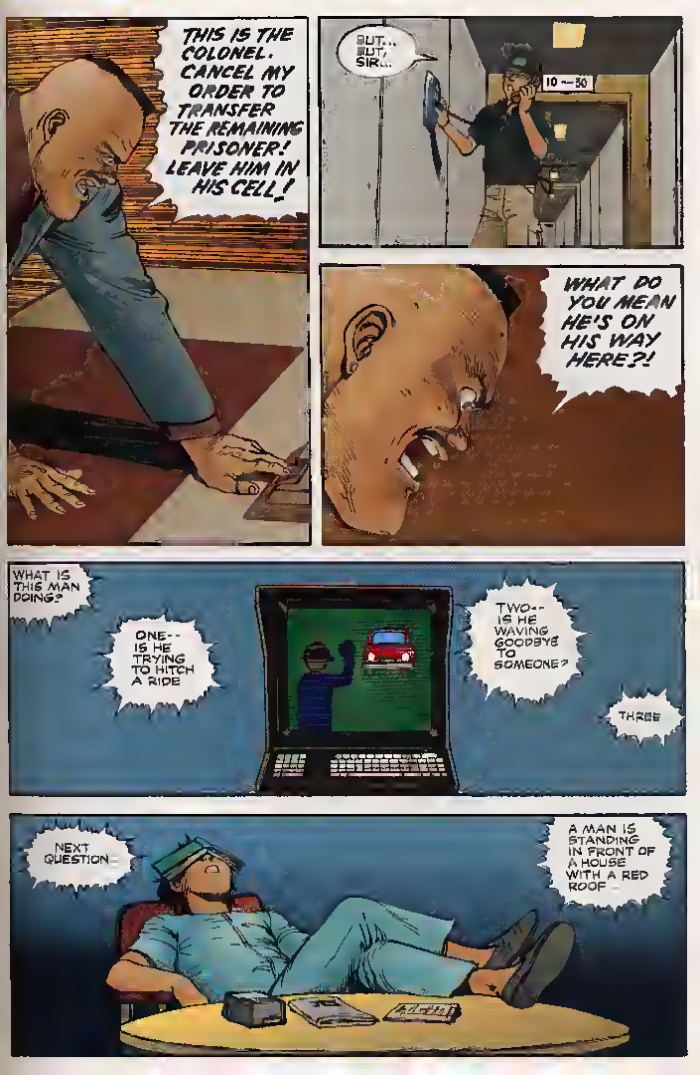
THERE SHE IS!!
PROCEED WITH CAUTION!
DON'T TAKE CHANCES!

CHAAARGE!!
THUP
!
?
WHAT IN...?
WHERE DID SHE —?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN SHE DISAPPEARED...
WE...WE ONLY LOST SIGHT OF HER FOR AN INSTANT, SIR.
SHE WAS DEAD AHEAD OF US... TRAPPED...
BAM
BLITHERING NINCOMPOOPS!
WE'RE VERY SORRY, SIR!!
NOT EVEN A COCKROACH CAN MOVE HERE UNDETECTED. THE GIRL MUST BE SOMEWHERE
NOW GO AND FIND HER!!!
YESSIR!!

WHERE AM I...?

THEY'RE STILL CHECKING, SIR, BUT SO FAR THERE'S BEEN NO SIGN OF HER.
YOUR OPINION...?
BUT, IF I MIGHT SUGGEST... DIDN'T YOU SAY SOMETHING ABOUT A BOY WHO WAS BROUGHT IN WITH HER...?
WITHOUT PROPER TESTS THERE'S NO POINT IN EVEN SPECULATING ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT SHE HAS THE POWER.
I'VE ALREADY ORDERED HIM BROUGHT HERE.
!
DAMN!!


THIS IS THE COLONEL. CANCEL MY ORDER TO TRANSFER THE REMAINING PRISONER! LEAVE HIM IN HIS CELL!
BUT... BUT, SIR...
10 — 30
WHAT DO YOU MEAN HE'S ON HIS WAY HERE?!
WHAT IS THIS MAN DOING?
ONE-- IS HE TRYING TO HITCH A RIDE
TWO-- IS HE WAVING GOODBYE TO SOMEONE?
THREE
NEXT QUESTION--
A MAN IS STANDING IN FRONT OF A HOUSE WITH A RED ROOF--

creak
WHAM

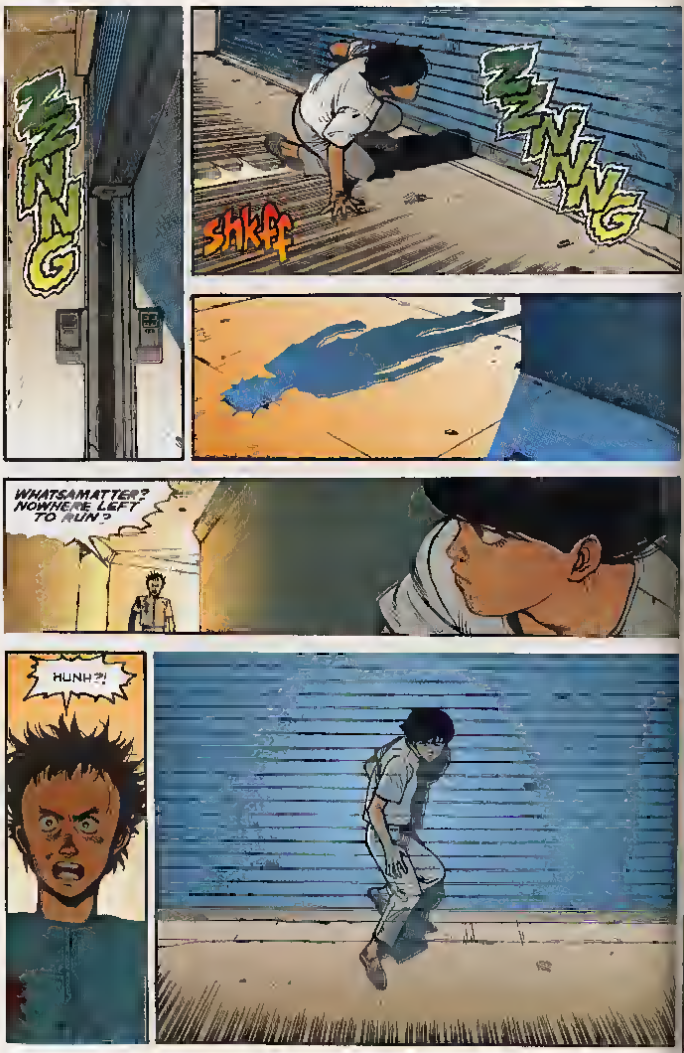
HUNH?
YOU RE THE ONE WHO WAS WITH KANEDA-- HIS NEW LITTLE FRIEND
?
ZAAA

SSHHH
BLAM
BLAM
!
AUGH!
WHAK
KRASH
BLAM
BLAM
!

OO...
OOH...
YOU'RE HISTORY!
SWOOSH
NNNGGG
!

WOOOOO!
FWOOM
NO!!
KRUSH

DAMN HER...
thud
SWUSH
YOU'RE MINE!!! YOU GOT THAT?!
!
tnak
VVVVT
KPOW
KPOW
tok
tok
tok
tok
RUN IT WON'T HELP

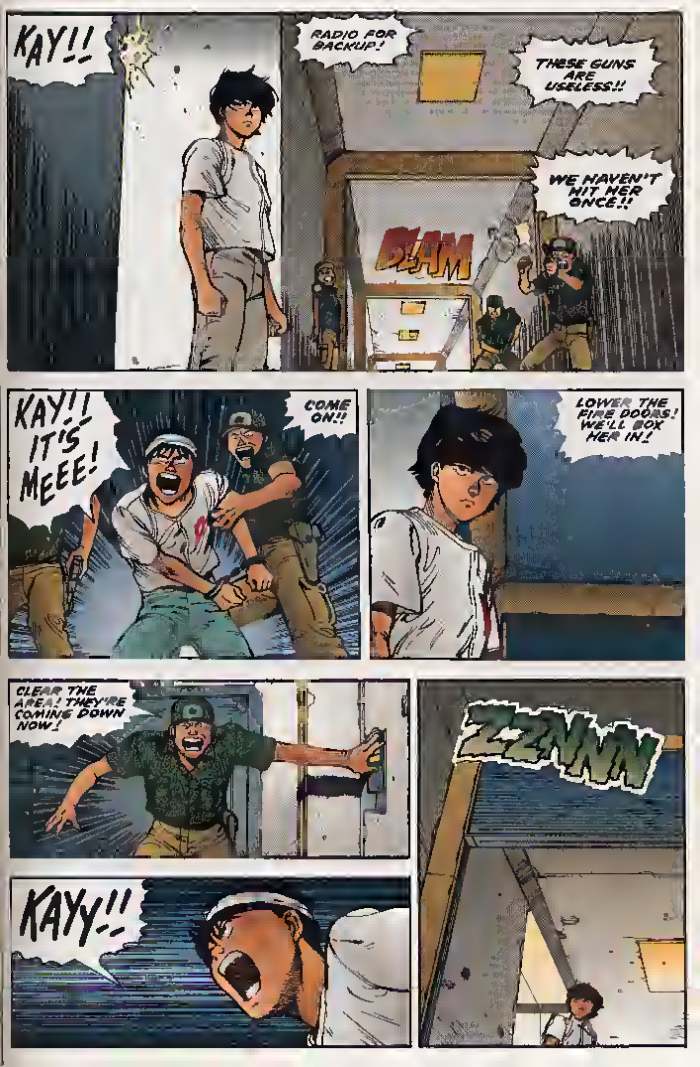

ZNNG
ZNNNG
shkff
WHATSAMATTER? NOWHERE LEFT TO RUN?
HUNH?!

BANG
VRRT
HOW DID SHE..?

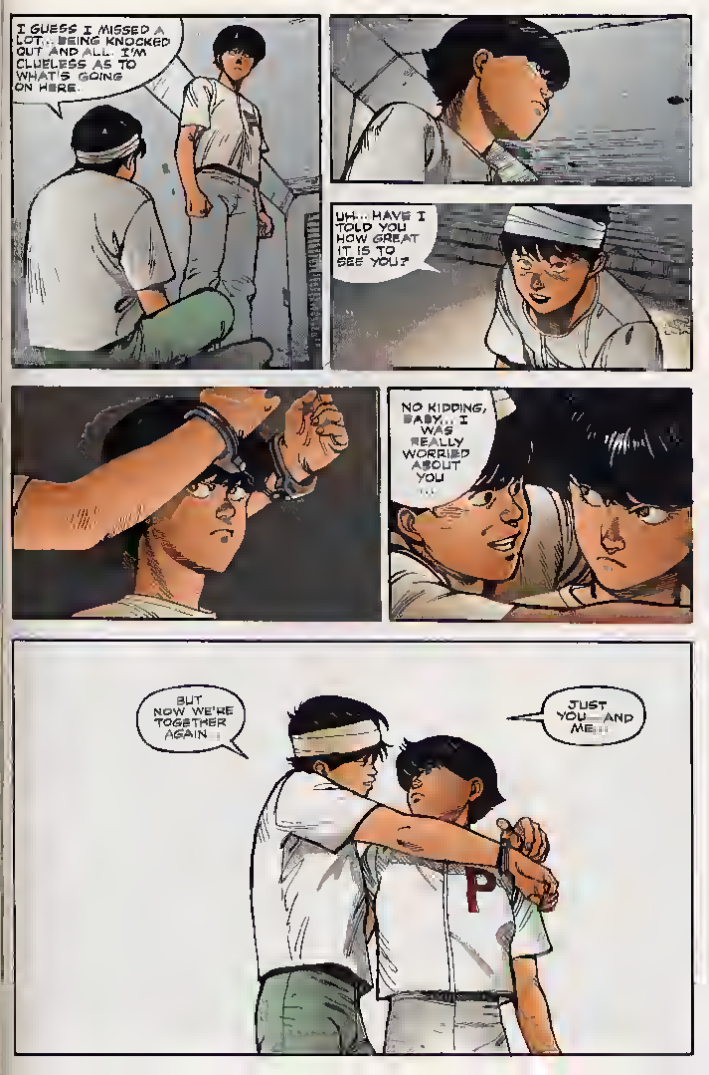
COME BACK HERE!!
KRUNK
YIII--!
?
SHE...SHE TELEPORTED ...?

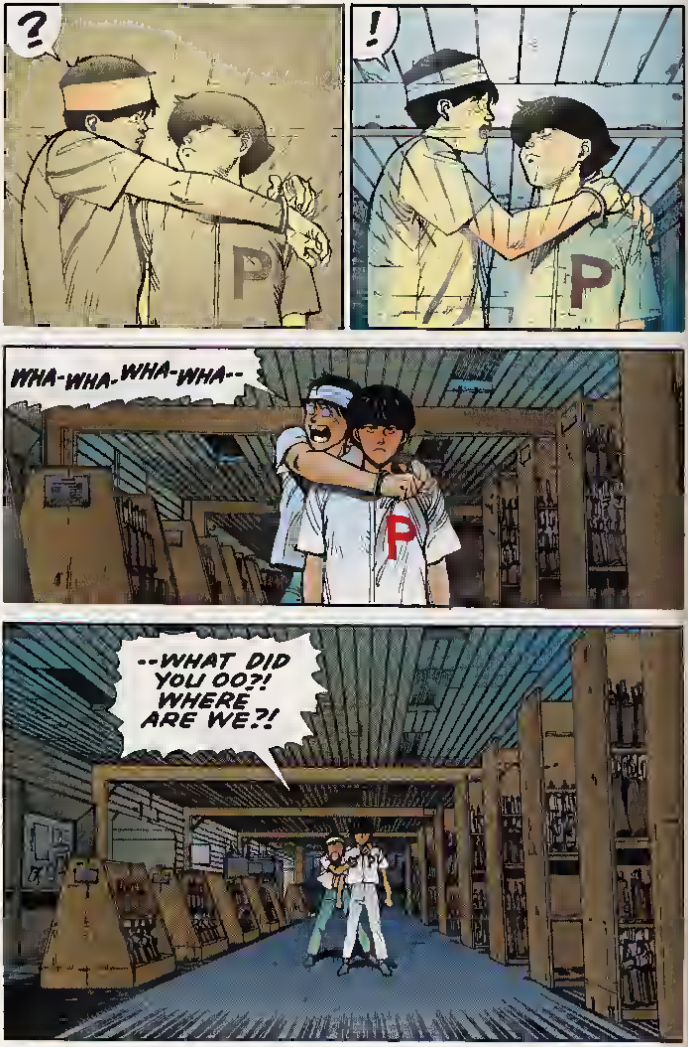
TROMP TROMP TROMP TROMP
MOVE IT!!
THEY'RE WEARING PROTECTIVE GEAR.
YOU GUYS ALWAYS GET THIS MUCH TRAFFIC THROUGH HERE?
SHUT UP!
IS THERE ANYWHERE AROUND HERE A GUY COULD TAKE A LEAK?
I SAID SHUT UP!!
NO KIDDING. I DON'T THINK I CAN HOLD IT MUCH LONGER!
CONTROL YOURSELF OR YOU CLEAN IT UP!
HUNH?!
!

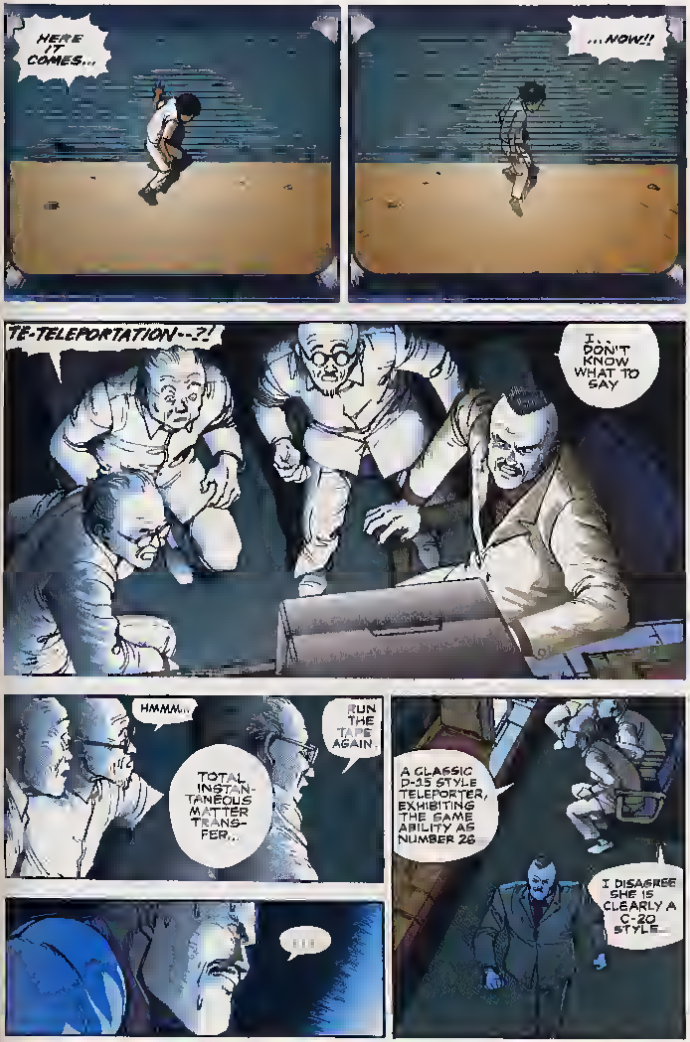
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
Thud
BLAM
GUGHHS
FIRE!
BLAM
FIRE!
BLAM BLAM
THE BULLETS ARE HAVING NO EFFECT!
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!
YAAA!
WHAT'S GOING ON?
RUN!
WHAT..?!

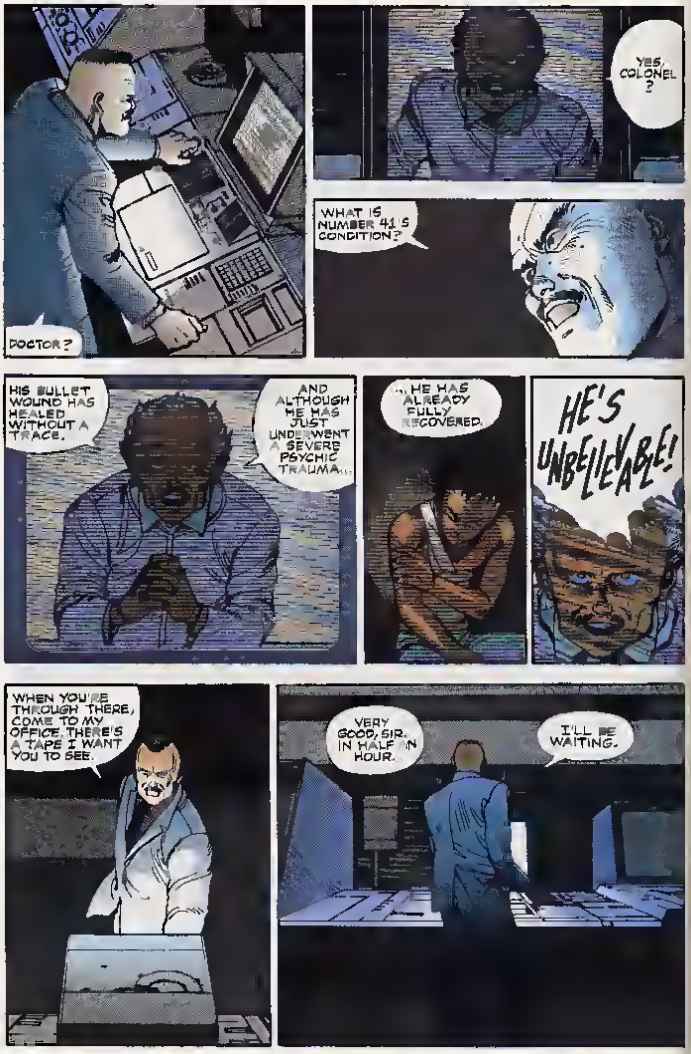

KAY!!
RADIO FOR BACKUP!
THESE GUNS ARE USELESS!!
WE HAVEN'T HIT HER ONCE!!
BAM
BAM
KAY!! IT'S MEEE!
COME ON!!
LOWER THE FIRE DOORS! WE'LL BOX HER IN!
CLEAR THE AREA! THEY'RE COMING DOWN NOW!
ZZNNN
KAYY!!

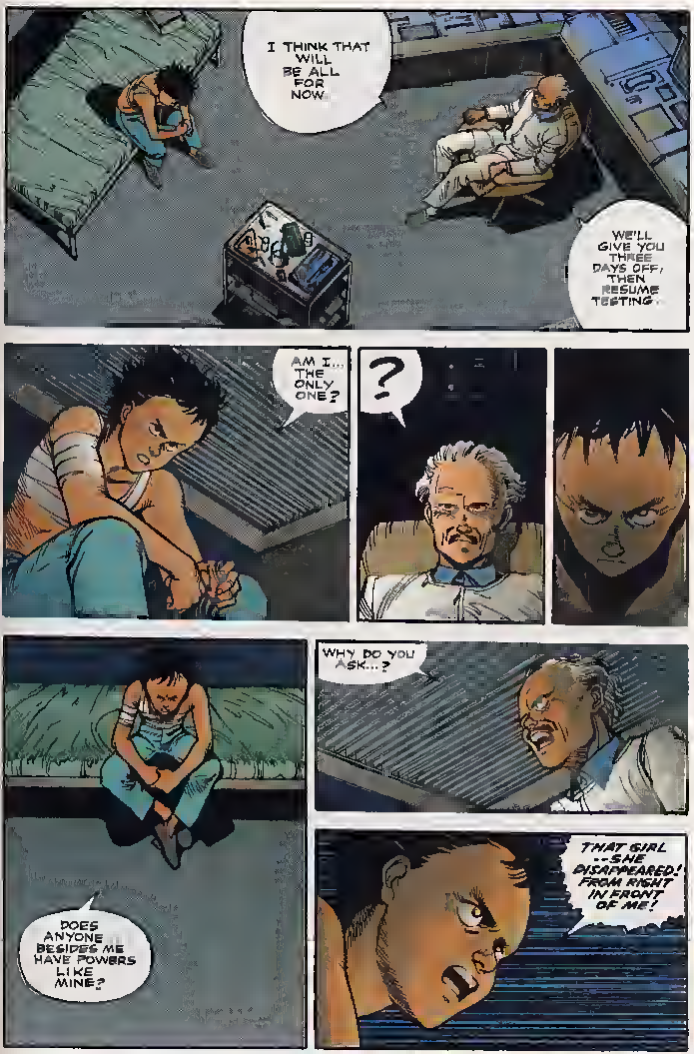
LEGGO!
YIPE!
WAIT FOR MEEE!
ZZZNNN
TOK
SAFE!
SWISH
KLONG
KAY.. BABY..

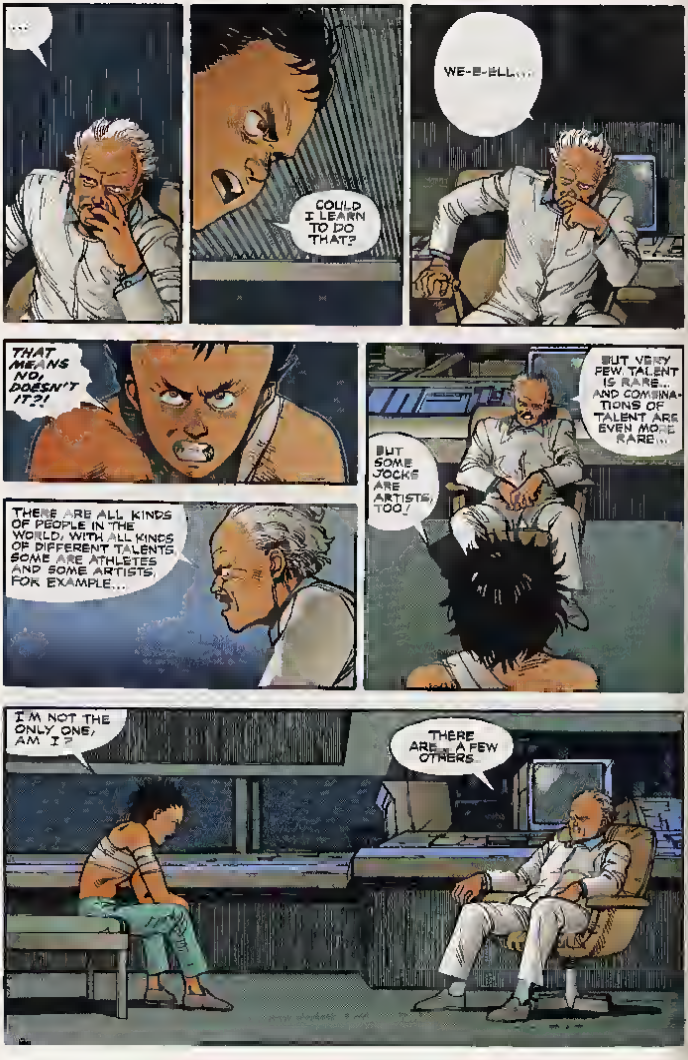

I GUESS I MISSED A LOT... BEING KNOCKED OUT AND ALL. I'M CLUELESS AS TO WHAT'S GOING ON HERE.
UH... HAVE I TOLD YOU HOW GREAT IT IS TO SEE YOU?
NO KIDDING, BABY... I WAS REALLY WORRIED ABOUT YOU...
BUT NOW WE'RE TOGETHER AGAIN...
JUST YOU—AND ME!!

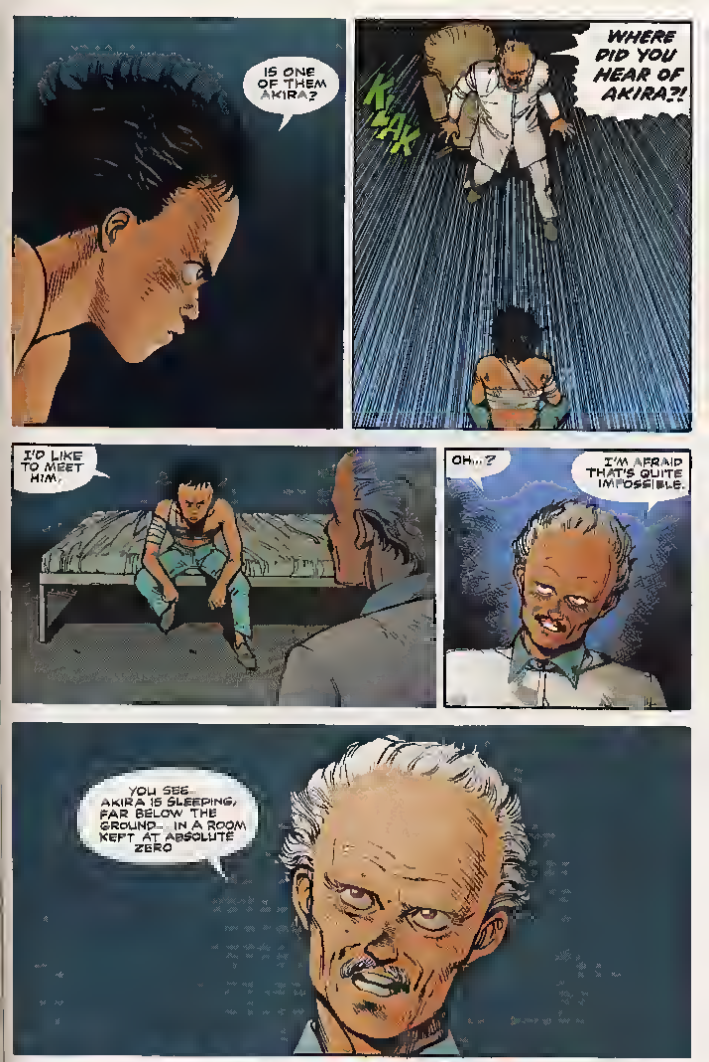

?
!
WHA-WHA-WHA-WHA--
--WHAT DID YOU DO?! WHERE ARE WE?!


HERE IT COMES...
...NOW!!
TE-TELEPORTATION--?!
I... DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY
HMMM...
TOTAL INSTANTANEOUS MATTER TRANSFER..
RUN THE TAPE AGAIN.
A CLASSIC D-15 STYLE TELEPORTER, EXHIBITING THE SAME ABILITY AS NUMBER 26
I DISAGREE SHE IS CLEARLY A C-20 STYLE


DOCTOR?
YES, COLONEL ?
WHAT IS NUMBER 41 S CONDITION?
HIS BULLET WOUND HAS HEALED WITHOUT A TRACE.
AND ALTHOUGH HE HAS JUST UNDERWENT A SEVERE PSYCHIC TRAUMA...
...HE HAS ALREADY FULLY RECOVERED.
HE'S UNBELIEVABLE!
WHEN YOU'RE THROUGH THERE, COME TO MY OFFICE. THERE'S A TAPE I WANT YOU TO SEE.
VERY GOOD, SIR. IN HALF AN HOUR.
I'LL BE WAITING.


I THINK THAT WILL BE ALL FOR NOW.
WE'LL GIVE YOU THREE DAYS OFF; THEN RESUME TESTING.
AM I... THE ONLY ONE?
?
DOES ANYONE BESIDES ME HAVE POWERS LIKE MINE?
WHY DO YOU ASK...?
THAT GIRL --SHE DISAPPEARED! FROM RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME!


...
COULD I LEARN TO DO THAT?
WE-E-ELL...
THAT MEANS NO, DOESN'T IT?!
THERE ARE ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE IN THE WORLD, WITH ALL KINDS OF DIFFERENT TALENTS. SOME ARE ATHLETES, AND SOME ARTISTS, FOR EXAMPLE...
BUT SOME JOCKS ARE ARTISTS, TOO!
BUT VERY FEW TALENT IS RARE... AND COMBINATIONS OF TALENT ARE EVEN MORE RARE...
I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE, AM I?
THERE ARE A FEW OTHERS.

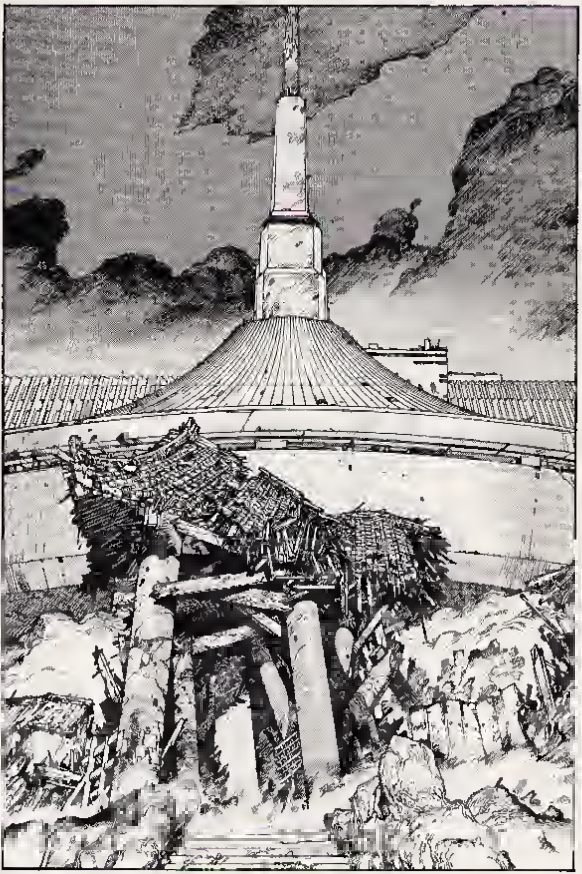

IS ONE OF THEM AKIRA?
KLAK
WHERE DID YOU HEAR OF AKIRA?!
I'D LIKE TO MEET HIM.
OH...?
I'M AFRAID THAT'S QUITE IMPOSSIBLE.
YOU SEE... AKIRA IS SLEEPING, FAR BELOW THE GROUND... IN A ROOM KEPT AT ABSOLUTE ZERO

NEXT ISSUE: **WEAPON OF VENGEANCE**

OTOMO GALLERY

Last issue we presented for the first time in these pages examples of the special artwork created by Katsuhiro Otomo as title pages for the serialized segments of *Akira* which appear in *Young Magazine*, the popular comics anthology from Kodansha, Ltd.

Here then are three more illustrations from the trend-setting magazine in which the saga of *Akira* first began publication in Tokyo



Along with providing a good look at how Mr Otomo's finely-shaded and detailed art appears in black-and-white prior to the computerized colorization done for our edition by Steve Oliff (with *Akira* creator Otomo's approval and consultation), the material offers a tantalizing glimpse of scenes and characters (such as Chiyoko, pictured above), that will be coming your way in the months ahead

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AKIRA SAITO
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ED MAGALONG
production

ANDREW WYATT
editorial assistant Epic edition

ARCHIE GODDWIN
editor epic edition

Within one of 21st Century Neo-Tokyo's great city towers is a secret government project. Here, a volatile group of individuals is gathered. Most volatile of all is Tetsuo, a juvenile delinquent with murderous psychic power. The project's head, the Colonel, hopes Tetsuo can be trained to counter an even greater threat — the as yet slumbering paranormal giant AKIRA. But the mutant children in the project sense impending doom in Tetsuo's presence. And two captives there — the anti-government agent, Kay, and Tetsuo's former friend, Kaneda — would do anything to see Tetsuo never unleashes his power again. All of these individuals are prisoners in a deadly chain of events, players in a mounting game of earth-shattering consequence.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO'S

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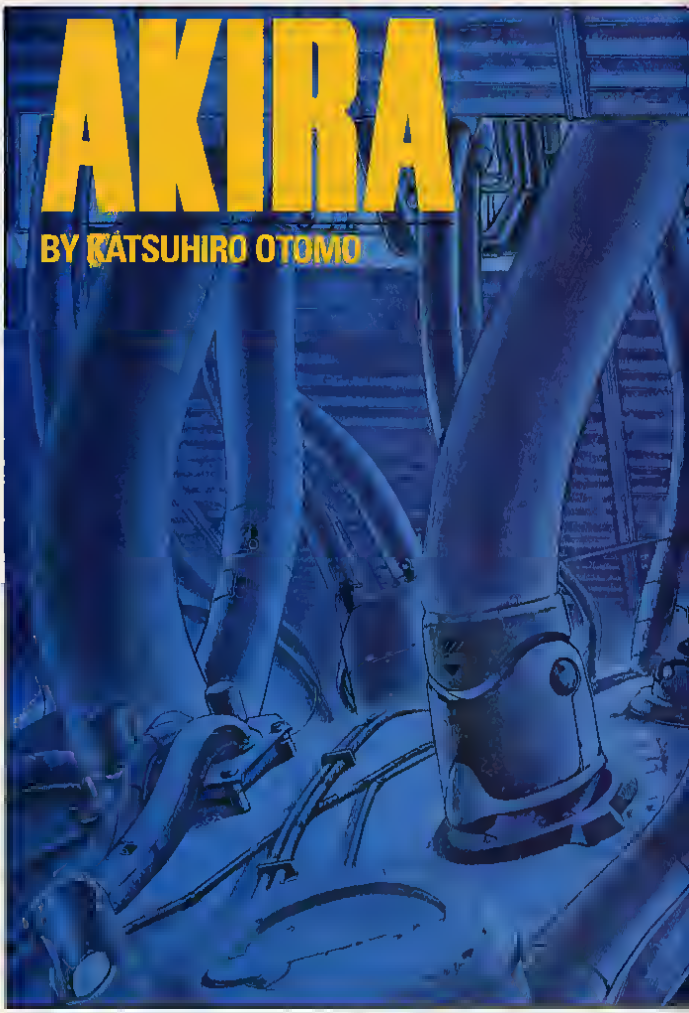
AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO



CHAPTER 1

PRISONERS AND PLAYERS

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